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14 January 1955

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SOUTHEAST ASIA



2. Comment on Laotian government policy toward Pathet Lao:

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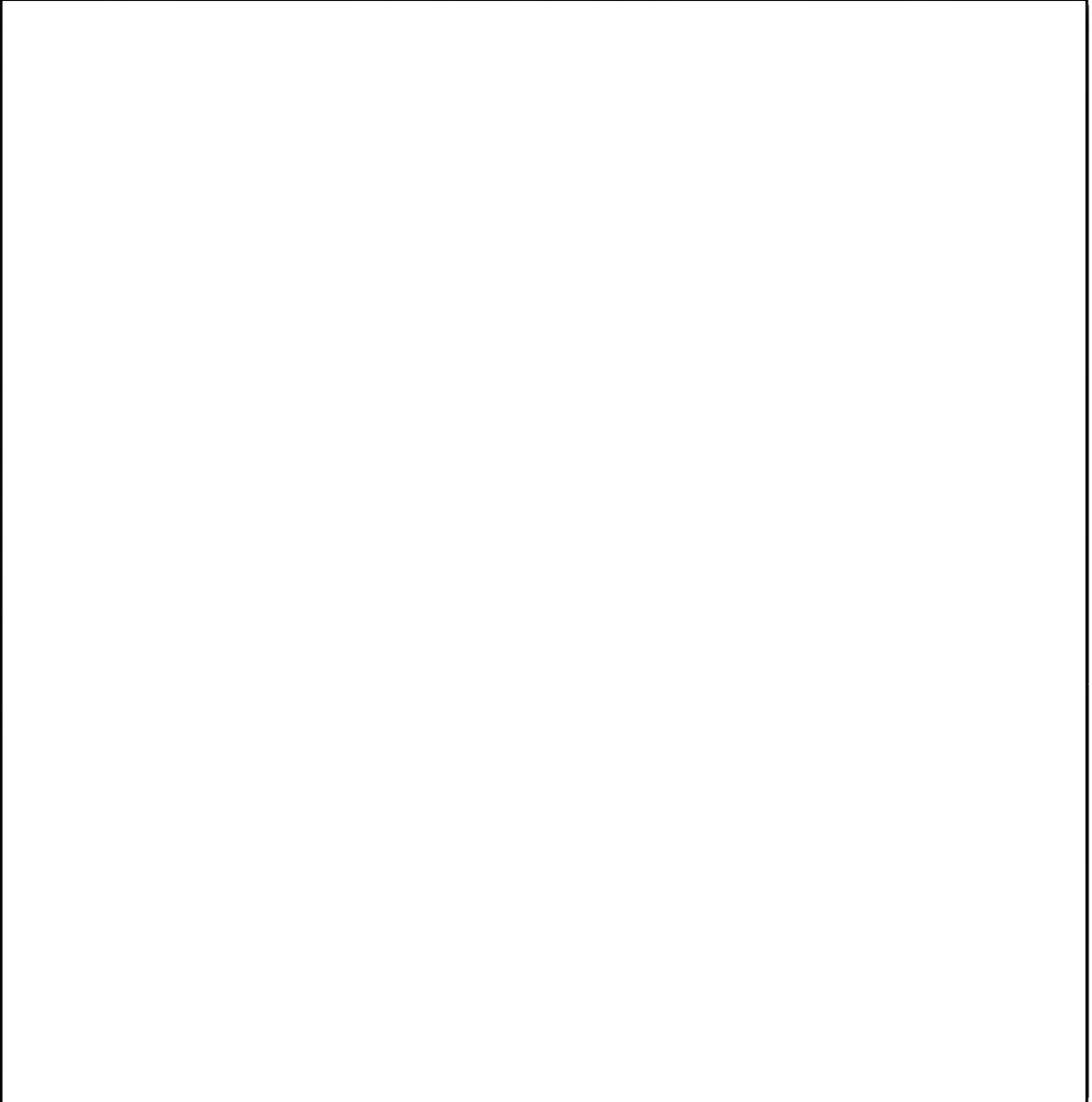
The Laotian government appears to be moving closer toward a coalition with the Viet Minh-backed Pathet Lao, a course previously rejected by Premier Katay. Katay announced on 8 January that members of the Pathet Lao would receive appointments "in accordance with the laws," but he left unexplained the nature of those appointments.

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The government has also indicated a willingness to concede partial control of the disputed northern provinces to the Pathet Lao. At the same time, it has been hinted that the ambitious Prince Petsarath, who has been seeking a political comeback with Thai support, might soon return from his exile in Thailand.



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5. Comment on the Iraqi-Turkish conversation in Baghdad:

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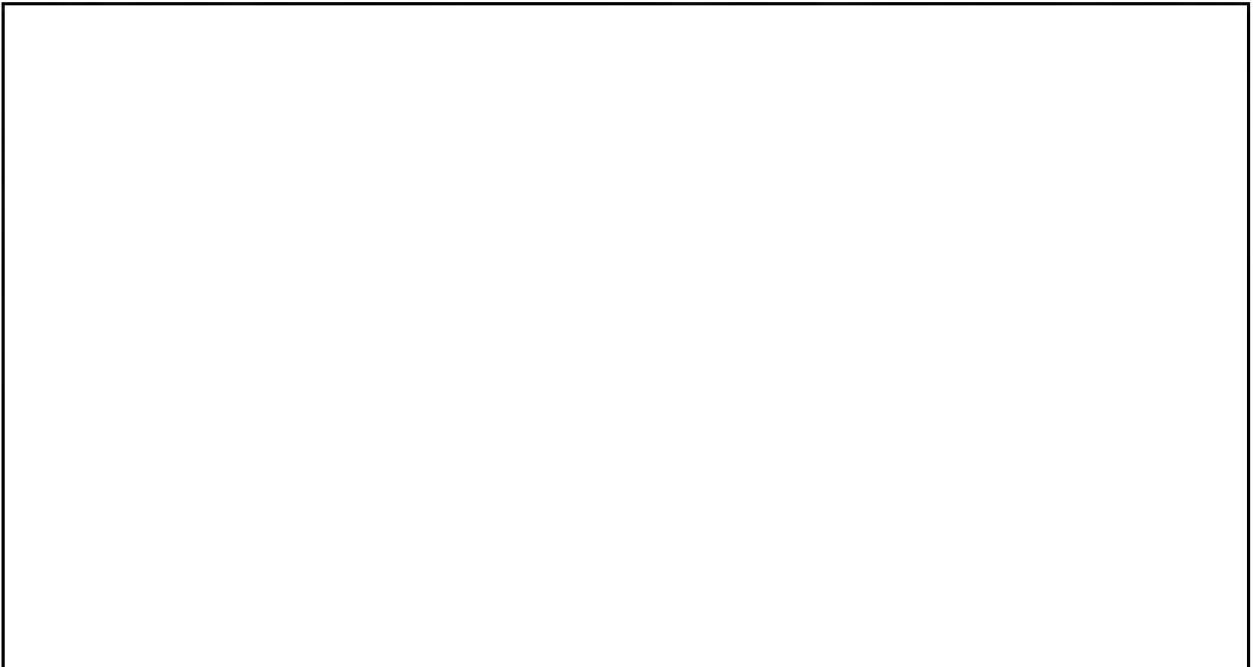
The communiqué issued on 13 January by Iraq and Turkey suggests that little tangible progress has been made toward Iraqi integration in Middle East defense planning.

The two governments formally announced that they had decided to conclude, "as soon as possible," an agreement "to co-operate to repel any aggression." However, the communiqué provides that other states in the area interested in defense be consulted before the agreement is concluded and invited to sign it simultaneously with Turkey and Iraq. This practically assures a considerable delay, during which time Egyptian leaders and Arab League politicians will have an opportunity to exert a negative influence.

The announcement constitutes a high point in the improvement of Iraqi-Turkish relations and indirectly suggests that other Arab states consider improving their relations with Turkey. 

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WESTERN EUROPE

8. French senators optimistic on Paris accords' chances:

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Key French senators canvassed by American officials are convinced that the chances are good for ratification of the Paris accords by the Council

of the Republic. The senators interviewed thus far represent all parties except the Communists, Gaullists, and the extreme right.

Some senators expressed approval of the arms production pool scheme but said they would not change the present text of the accords to include this proposal. Several senators who were unusually violent in their criticism of the government suggested that Mendes-France is deliberately overstating the difficulties envisaged in order to take the credit later for passage of the accords.

All senators canvassed agreed that any Soviet attempt to influence the council against the accords would have the opposite effect. Most of them believed that ratification must be completed before another approach on East-West talks is made to the USSR.

Comment:



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[redacted] There seems little likelihood that the Western European Union countries will accept the French proposal in



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toto, but a compromise resulting in token approval of a pool with some supranational trappings is likely and will probably satisfy the council.

The reported views of these senators also run counter to Mendes-France's argument that action on East-West talks is essential to ensure council approval of the Paris accords.